

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A complaint management system, also referred to as a disputes system, enables registered consumers to file a complaint against a merchant. During complaint preparation, the disputes system advises the consumer of relevant cases and other information, allows the consumer to vent their emotions, and prepares a well-formed complaint on behalf of the consumer. After the consumer approves filing of the complaint, the complaint is compared with the merchant's stored business rules. If the merchant's solution for the problem and the consumer's desired solution match, then the disputes system automatically forms an agreement. The disputes system monitors compliance with the agreement by the merchant and consumer. If the merchant has specified a business rule for the problem, but the merchant's solution for the problem and the consumer's desired solution differ, then the disputes system initiates automated mediation, automatically preparing an Answer comprising the solution from the merchant's business rule as the merchant's starting negotiating position. Alternatively, the complaint management system may automatically negotiate parameters of the proposed solution to improve customer satisfaction, and may enter the item complained of to at least one of a resale market and a refund competition. If the merchant has not specified a business rule for the consumer's problem, then the disputes system initiates automated mediation, asking the merchant for his or her Answer to the consumer's complaint. At the conclusion of the case, the disputes system automatically prepares an anonymized case summary, and adds the anonymized case summary to a database of anonymized case summaries.